

110TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 1347

Praising relief efforts by Chinese individuals and nongovernmental organizations to assist victims of the recent earthquake in the People's Republic of China, recognizing the Chinese Government for allowing such efforts to proceed and for allowing open media coverage of the earthquake, and encouraging the Chinese Government to continue this new era of openness.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 15, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Virginia (for himself, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Ms. LEE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Praising relief efforts by Chinese individuals and nongovernmental organizations to assist victims of the recent earthquake in the People's Republic of China, recognizing the Chinese Government for allowing such efforts to proceed and for allowing open media coverage of the earthquake, and encouraging the Chinese Government to continue this new era of openness.

Whereas on May 20, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously adopted H. Res. 1195, which expressed condolences and sympathy to the People's Republic of China for the grave loss of life and vast destruction

caused by the catastrophic earthquake centered in Sichuan Province on May 12, 2008;

Whereas the confirmed death toll from the earthquake has risen from 22,000 as of May 20 to 69,181 as of June 23, 2008;

Whereas 18,498 people are missing and 374,171 are injured, and the death toll is still expected to rise;

Whereas Chinese nongovernmental organizations, grassroots volunteers, and private businesses have joined in—and often led—a massive relief effort to provide medical supplies, food, tents, and clothing to the towns and remote villages in the disaster zone despite blocked or damaged roads and bridges;

Whereas Chinese nongovernmental organizations are using information independent from the Chinese Government and are receiving tips from television news, Internet Weblogs (or “blogs”), and other sources;

Whereas teams of volunteers from smaller unregistered nongovernmental organizations arrived rapidly in the disaster zone, within hours after the earthquake;

Whereas nongovernmental organizations in China have historically been required to register with the Government and larger nongovernmental organizations are more rigidly controlled;

Whereas, in response to the earthquake, the Chinese Government has accepted the formation and participation of both registered and unregistered Chinese nongovernmental organizations—which has never happened before—and has acknowledged that these organizations can contribute to the reconstruction of the damaged region;

Whereas Chinese nongovernmental organizations, such as the Chengdu Urban Rivers Association, have fielded hundreds of calls and e-mails to assist and coordinate relief efforts using associates and volunteers who were already in the affected area before the earthquake struck;

Whereas online citizen groups mobilized rapidly to provide assistance to earthquake victims;

Whereas such groups include Tianya.cn, a leading Chinese online community that raised 24 million Yuan (\$3.5 million) for disaster relief, mostly from online donations by individuals;

Whereas Ngoen.org, a major information hub for Chinese nongovernmental organizations, set up a special bulletin board for the nongovernmental organization relief office in Chengdu to post announcements and stories for timely, extensive, and in-depth coverage of the earthquake;

Whereas the circulation of these stories of profound sadness and compassion generated a sense of national solidarity that has energized civic action by Chinese individuals in voluntary relief efforts;

Whereas since the earthquake occurred, the Red Cross Society of China has been carrying out the largest fundraising and relief activities and, as of June 12, 2008, is planning to allocate 2.5 billion yuan (\$362.32 million) for rehabilitation projects in areas hit by the earthquake;

Whereas the new registered and unregistered Chinese nongovernmental organizations, as well as online and offline citizen groups, acted rapidly to help manage the crisis;

Whereas the Chinese Government has begun to restrict media access to areas affected by the earthquake and to censor news stories of the earthquake and its aftermath, as evi-

denced by several reported incidences of detention of foreign journalists in the town of Dujiangyan;

Whereas an open press remains an effective tool to expose corruption and improve public accountability; and

Whereas this massive, quick, and efficient relief effort and an open press are important in developing and enhancing Chinese civil society: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) praises the Chinese individuals who have  
3       formed voluntary relief efforts for their selfless, altruistic  
4       commitment to provide aid and support for  
5       the victims of the catastrophic earthquake that occurred  
6       on May 12, 2008;

7               (2) recognizes the Chinese Government for allowing  
8       Chinese individuals and nongovernmental organizations  
9       unprecedented latitude in assisting  
10      earthquake victims and for allowing unprecedented  
11      open media coverage of the earthquake; and

12              (3) encourages the Chinese Government to continue  
13      this new era of openness.

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